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Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Programme 18
Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).

2. Regulation 4.13 provides, inter alia, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as necessary to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by intergovernmental organs and international conferences since the adoption of the plan.

3. The revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 proposed in the annex substantially modify programme 18.

4. In March 2002, the fourth special session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was called to apprise its member States of follow-up action to the recommendation of the twenty-first session of the Commission in May 2001, which stipulated that ESCWA secretariat activities should focus on a limited number of priorities and be correspondingly restricted and that attention should be focused on Arab regional integration and the study of mechanisms that would activate this integration; and on reviewing the existing organizational structure of the secretariat in order best to serve Arab integration. This recommendation, along with the need to observe the guiding principles of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, as well as the need to respond more effectively to the major economic transformations and leaps forward in information and communications technology, precipitated by globalization, led to the programmatic restructuring of the secretariat and to organizational restructuring in line with the programmatic changes effected.

5. The revised programme 18 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 was discussed and endorsed by the session (Commission resolution 238 (S-IV) on

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the revised medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, revised programme of work and priorities for the biennium 2002-2003 of 11 March 2002). Guided by the recommendation of the Commission at its twenty-first session, the following major changes were introduced:

(a) Issues relating to agriculture and industry were linked to those of environment, energy and natural resources, owing to the common nature of the matters that need to be tackled, thereby integrating the management of water and energy and the production sectors;

(b) The functions relating to social issues were refocused to advance the promotion of integrated social policies for the ESCWA region;

(c) The functions of the subprogramme and of the related division dealing with economic issues were refocused to enhance the capacity of member countries to coordinate their economic policies and achieve economic development by providing quantitative assessment of economic and financial trends;

(d) The fact that globalization is a driving force that is shaping development at all levels was accounted for by creating a division that deals with issues and challenges posed by globalization, namely, transboundary flows of goods, persons, capital and services. This will, in turn, reinforce the process of regional integration, which is being addressed within the same division;

(e) The rapid developments in information and communication technology necessitated the creation of a new subprogramme and of the related division to deal with information and communication technology issues to help bridge the gap created by rapid advancement in this field by assisting member States in increasing their capabilities in this area;

(f) Statistical activities were strengthened by combining the technical and substantive components thereof and by assigning a unit to oversee the coordination of statistical activities, which cut across all the divisions.

6. The new subprogramme structure of programme 18 is as follows:

Subprogramme 1. Integrated policies for the management of regional resources for sustainable development;

Subprogramme 2. Integrated social policies;

Subprogramme 3. Economic analysis and forecasting for regional development;

Subprogramme 4. Regional integration and responding to globalization;

Subprogramme 5. Information and communication technology for regional integration;

Subprogramme 6. Comparable statistics for improved planning and decision-making.

7. The medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/234 of 23 December 2000 and issued as document A/55/6/Rev.1. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 is contained in documents A/56/6 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2 (Introduction, Sects.

1-33 and Income sects. 1-3). It was revised and approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 56/253 and 56/254 of 24 December 2001.

8. While new text proposed for insertion in the medium-term plan usually appears in boldface type, such is not the case for programme 18, as the entire narrative is new. However, in the proposed revisions to the section on legislative mandates that follows the narrative, new text to be inserted does appear in boldface type and text to be deleted appears in strikeout type.

Annex

Proposed revisions to programme 18, Economic and social development in Western Asia

Overall orientation

18.1 The overall orientation of the programme is to nurture comprehensive, integrated, equitable and sustainable economic and social development, at both the national and regional levels, that would ultimately allow the countries of the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to manage effectively the rapidly changing economic world environment and enhance the quality of life for the people. To this end, the programme will stimulate regional cooperation and integration by providing support to member countries in formulating regional programmes, mechanisms and solutions in both the economic and social fields that would assist them in achieving synergies and common positions, thus facilitating both regional integration and a balanced integration into the world economy, while taking into consideration national, regional and global concerns.

18.2 The ultimate contribution of ESCWA is based on assisting member countries in creating an enabling environment that would stimulate the achievement of sustainable development with its three interdependent and mutually reinforcing components: economic development, social development and protection of the environment.

18.3 The direction of the programme is provided in resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, which, in its resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, established the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) and which, in its resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, amended those terms in order to underscore the social dimension of the functions of the Commission, at which time the name was altered to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in order to reflect that change. Further direction to the programme is provided in ESCWA resolutions, in particular, its resolution 220 (XX) on the adoption, by ESCWA member countries, of the Beirut Declaration, dated 27 May 1999, on the occasion of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Commission. The Beirut Declaration presented a vision of the role and tasks of ESCWA for the twenty-first century aimed at enhancing the role of the Commission at the regional level, in line with the Secretary-General's efforts to revitalize the performance of the United Nations at the dawn of the third millennium. The direction of the programme is also guided by the recommendation of the Commission at its twenty-first session, in May 2001, that ESCWA secretariat activities should focus on a limited number of priorities and be correspondingly restricted. It was also recommended that attention should be focused on Arab regional integration and the study of mechanisms that would activate this integration and on reviewing the existing organizational structure of the secretariat in order best to serve Arab integration.

18.4 Substantive responsibility for the programme is vested in the Commission. The overall strategy of ESCWA is designed around six interdependent and complementary subprogrammes. In fulfilling its objective, ESCWA will place emphasis on further integration of the human and social components into development planning, focusing on building institutional and economic management capacity, increasing productivity and competitiveness of production sectors and increasing the use of available human resources, formulating and promoting positive social values and supporting civil society and governance.

18.5 The main elements of the strategy to be pursued by ESCWA reside in the following:

(a) Assisting member countries in coping with the multidimensional requirements of globalization by fostering competitiveness, based on economic efficiency and the acquisition of the requisite technological skills;

(b) Serving as a platform for networking and the exchange of experiences and best practices among member countries, among all actors in the development process and, in particular, civil society institutions, in support of transparent governance, and among United Nations agencies with a regional mandate;

(c) Advocating a multisectoral approach in addressing issues of common programmatic concern, chiefly, poverty reduction, gender mainstreaming, least

advantaged groups, acquisition of information and communication technologies, transparent governance and partnership with civil society institutions, popular participation and issues related to the environment;

(d) Advising member countries on the integration of the human and social dimensions of development into their policies by focusing on capacity-building with regard to human resources; proposing mechanisms through which to identify the specifications and qualifications required of human resources that would enable member countries to become the driving force of social and economic development; and providing appropriate training and technical assistance in relevant fields;

(e) Providing assistance in producing and/or generating reliable, customized, harmonized regional data and indicators compatible with internationally recognized statistical standards, as a tool for sound analysis and judicious policy formulation; assisting in data collection, research and analysis; and monitoring trends;

(f) Providing continued support to the least developed member country (Yemen) and other countries with special needs and, in particular, in terms of promoting post-conflict development and reconstruction in ESCWA member countries that have witnessed war and civil strife.

18.6 In fulfilling its mandates, ESCWA has maintained, and shall continue to maintain, cooperative arrangements with member countries and with a host of United Nations and non-United Nations regional organizations, notably the League of Arab States, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations, other regional commissions, the United Nations Development Group, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Subprogramme 1
Integrated policies for the management of regional resources for sustainable development

Objective

18.7 The objective of this subprogramme is to have a positive impact on regional integration and cooperation among ESCWA member countries, based on a concerted approach to integrated sustainable management of water and energy and the production sectors.

Strategy

18.8 Within ESCWA, substantive responsibility for this subprogramme is vested in the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division. The ESCWA region is marked by its tendency towards desertification along with scarcity and uneven distribution of water resources and the existence of substantial, but unequally distributed, fossil and renewable energy reserves. The region is also known for the low productivity and weak competitiveness of the production sector, which is due, at least in part, to the inefficient use of water and energy, particularly in agriculture and industry. Accordingly, activities will target four interrelated components, namely: (a) integrated sustainable management of water and energy resources; (b) sound environmental policies; (c) sustainable development through competitiveness and harmonization of the production sectors; and (d) policies and measures for integrating the social dimension in the sustainable development process.

18.9 Regional cooperation mechanisms in these areas will be formulated and promoted. Efforts will also be exerted to increase awareness of decision makers and users with regard to critical water and energy issues. Member countries will be assisted in addressing the consequences of economic reform policies and restructuring and privatization in these sectors.

18.10 Particular emphasis will be placed on the identification of appropriate solutions for the problems involved and advocacy for rationalizing the utilization of water and energy resources. The subprogramme will promote integrated sustainable management policies and policy measures for available and potential water and energy resources by providing training programmes and materials on building institutional and

human capacities in the management of these resources, leading to more efficient use thereof, particularly in agriculture and industry. This would further lead to continuous updating of the database of water and energy resources and, eventually, to a geographic information system for these resources.

18.11 Special attention will be given to the formulation and promotion of regional cooperation mechanisms and the legal and technical aspects of such cooperation in the management of shared water resources and energy networks.

18.12 Member countries will be provided with advice on ways and means of incorporating the right to development in the management of water, energy and environment protection. In particular, support will be provided to decision makers in their efforts to integrate into their policies and plans the social aspects of managing water, energy and environment. Ways and means of increasing the access of the poor, especially poor women, to cheap energy and water, especially clean water, will be identified, and options that would facilitate the creation of new jobs and generate income, particularly for poor women, will be pursued.

18.13 Activities will facilitate the establishment and coordination of monitoring and reporting mechanisms on environmental issues, maintaining and developing region-wide indicators of sustainable development and promoting the implementation of the relevant chapters of Agenda 21 by supporting Governments in their efforts to integrate environmental considerations into their development policies and facilitating the development of regional positions and proposals, which will be reported in the global agenda of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, in cooperation with relevant regional organizations.

18.14 Support will be provided to member countries in the formulation and implementation, at the national and regional levels, of coordinated sectoral policy tools in agriculture and industry, including national and regional harmonization of norms and application of certification and accreditation schemes.

18.15 Special attention will be paid to enterprise development, networking and clustering, innovative schemes in management and technology and improved linkages between technology and sectoral development, in order to harness the efforts of individual member countries to enhance competitiveness and turn innovations into an effective vehicle for development. Efforts will be made to assist member countries in filling the gaps in vertical chains and/or in the introduction of knowledge-based high-tech industries by promoting development of the production and service sectors in order to achieve maximum value added, competitiveness and sustainability to the economies of member countries and the region. Measures to facilitate capacity-building will be identified in order to enhance the productivity, competitiveness and environmental compatibility of service, industrial and agricultural outputs.

Expected accomplishments

18.16 Expected accomplishments would include: (a) increased ability of member countries to formulate integrated policies for the efficient and sustainable management of water and energy resources; (b) increased regional cooperation in the management of shared surface and groundwater resources and energy networks; (c) increased capacity of member countries in the formulation and implementation of policies and policy measures for sustainable development; and (d) increased use by member countries of tools and techniques to enhance productivity and competitiveness in the production sectors.

Indicators of achievement

18.17 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) the number of countries formulating environmentally sound policies, policy measures and technologies for the management of water and energy resources; (b) the number of countries joining in the implementation of the formulated regional framework for cooperation in management of shared surface and groundwater resources and energy networks; (c) the number of countries adopting and implementing policies and environmental management measures and safeguards to protect the environment and decrease pollution; and (d) the number of countries adopting innovative technology and management initiatives to enhance competitiveness and more sustainable and efficient use of such technology.

Subprogramme 2
Integrated social policies

Objective

18.18 The objective of this subprogramme is to achieve regional cooperation in the advocacy and promotion of comprehensive and integrated social policies that are region-specific, culturally sensitive and have a practical orientation.

Strategy

18.19 Within ESCWA, substantive responsibility for this subprogramme is vested in the Social Development Division, which assumes an important role in assisting member countries in addressing such social problems as the unbalanced provision of basic social services, the need for comprehensive and integrated social policies and the need to address the social and cultural impact of globalization on society, including the uneven distribution of the benefits of trade liberalization and the rapid pace of technological change. The subprogramme will therefore be oriented towards the promotion of an integrated and holistic approach to social development that is based on the right to development and the promotion of positive cultural and social values. Under this subprogramme, the establishment of policies for social development continues to be a priority.

18.20 In carrying out its mandates, the subprogramme will pursue the following strategies:

(a) Promoting focused, gender-sensitive policies, approaches, methodologies and programmes that contribute to furthering social integration, inclusion and equity;

(b) Providing advice to member countries on the formulation of comprehensive and integrated social policies, based on research, pilot projects and best practices, that take into consideration the strong and intricate links between the economic and social aspects of development, with special emphasis on poverty and unemployment reduction, employment-linked education, empowerment of women, social integration and population, urban development and housing;

(c) Providing, through ESCWA, a forum for the establishment of stable networking links and the exchange of experiences and best practices between all partners and actors in the social development process at the regional level, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and in order to further popular participation, transparency and accountability in relation to social policies in general and urban governance in particular, as a prerequisite for sustainable socio-economic development;

(d) Furnishing assistance to member countries in strengthening institutions and the capacity of national and regional mechanisms leading to integrated regional responses and concerted actions in relation to the agendas of global conferences;

(e) Assisting member countries in formulating strategies and policies for sustainable human development and integrated policy action, with particular regard to poverty and unemployment reduction and with a focus on youth and women, through improving access to better education and upgrading skills to correspond with the needs of the new labour market. To this end, ESCWA will conduct field surveys and analyses on the employment status of youth and women, labour force supply and demand, business associations, improvements to employment policies and the possibility of exchange of labour among member countries and on advising or implementing projects on self-employment opportunities;

(f) Contributing to increasing awareness of gender issues by conducting media campaigns, organizing meetings and workshops on critical issues and building the capacities of national mechanisms for the empowerment of women and their advancement by advocating an approach based on gender equity and equality in the region, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies, plans and programmes;

(g) Providing support to member countries and local authorities in formulating appropriate, innovative and integrated policies and programmes on population and development, improving the physical environment and advocating partnership between governments and municipalities and increasing capacity for popular participation in urban development at the local level, particularly in cities and other urban areas;

(h) According special attention to post-conflict reconstruction which takes into consideration the economic, social and physical dimensions of development.

Expected accomplishments

18.21 Expected accomplishments would include: (a) improved ability of member countries to formulate integrated social policies and programmes that incorporate advantageous cultural values; (b) increased networking mechanisms for social development among partners and actors in the development process at the regional, national and local levels; (c) improved capacity of policy makers in formulating poverty reduction policies, measures, mechanisms and programmes to implement projects aimed at providing the population with opportunities for productive employment; (d) increased responsiveness of policy makers to the formulation of gender-sensitive policies, programmes and mechanisms, understanding of the main issues involved in the empowerment of women and awareness of the significance of gender mainstreaming; and (e) improved ability of policy makers to address, in their strategies, population issues and critical issues with regard to good urban governance and security of tenure.

Indicators of achievement

18.22 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) the number of ESCWA countries formulating and implementing appropriate social policies; (b) the number of joint committees and projects between Governments and civil society institutions at the regional, national and local levels; (c) increase in the number of measures introduced by member countries in order to reduce poverty and unemployment, especially among youth and women, and ensure adequate education and/or technical training facilities for the poor; (d) the number of countries and institutions incorporating a gender perspective into policies, plans and statistics, leading to greater participation of women in the labour force, increase in the number of poor women starting their own businesses, changes in legislation in favour of women and increase in the number of countries acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and (e) increased number of population issues and critical issues of good urban governance in the strategies of policy makers.

Subprogramme 3
Economic analysis and forecasting for regional development

Objective

18.23 The objective of this subprogramme is to increase the capacity of member countries to coordinate their economic policies and achieve economic development by providing a quantitative assessment of economic and financial data and trends.

Strategy

18.24 Within ESCWA, the substantive responsibility for this subprogramme is vested in the Economic Analysis Division.

18.25 The strategy will target three related issues: (a) macroeconomic performance and trends; (b) analysis of the performance of production sectors; and (c) economic forecasting. Implementation of the subprogramme would require the provision of assistance to member countries in the formulation of appropriate economic policies and development strategies in response to the new challenges and opportunities. Thus, the subprogramme will conduct in-depth reviews, assessments and analyses of the economic situation and trends in the region with a view to providing information and tools to member countries that will enable them to meet national and regional policy-making and planning requirements effectively and contribute to regional integration.

18.26 The subprogramme will also undertake an analysis of the main trends in the production sectors of the economy as well as comparative economic studies among a set or subset of selected service and production sectors in member countries in order to assess the comparative strengths of these sectors at the domestic and regional levels. Moreover, it will analyse macroeconomic issues and the performance of production sectors using current analytical, forecasting and policy simulation tools. It will follow up international economic trends and transitions relevant to national and regional economies, especially an analysis of their impact on employment and other social issues. An analysis will also be conducted of regional financial markets and the mobilization of financial resources; fiscal developments; trends in foreign and domestic debt; banking systems and credit markets; and trends in the environment of increased

competitiveness. Member countries will be supported in order to increase their capacity for economic analysis in decision-making at all levels. This will be achieved by organizing training programmes, preparing training material and providing technical assistance, with emphasis on the analytical skills aspects of human resource development and the use of a harmonized set of microeconomic and macroeconomic indicators and tools, as well as economic forecasting models and multidimensional and interdisciplinary indicators of development.

18.27 The subprogramme will also focus on the assessment of economic reform policies in member countries and their impact on employment and social issues.

Expected accomplishments

18.28 Expected accomplishments would include: (a) utilization of macroeconomic variables and trends, and main trends in the production sectors of the economy by decision makers in achieving development goals; (b) increased use by member countries of regional integration indicators; (c) improved capacity of member countries and business associations for monitoring productivity trends and the performance of the production sectors; and (d) improved capacity of member countries to assess their comparative economic situation at the regional and international levels, and improved capacity of decision makers in member countries for timely intervention.

Indicators of achievement

18.29 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) increase in the number of countries utilizing economic forecasting models and multidimensional and interdisciplinary indicators of development; (b) the number of regional economic reports published using regional integration indicators developed by ESCWA; (c) the number of member countries using economic indicators to assess the performance of production sectors; and (d) increase in the number of assessments by member countries of their economic reform policies and their comparative economic situations.

Subprogramme 4
Regional integration and responding to globalization

Objective

18.30 The objective of this subprogramme is to facilitate transboundary flows of goods, services, persons and capital in order to meet the challenges posed by the trend towards globalization.

Strategy

18.31 Within ESCWA, substantive responsibility for this subprogramme is vested in the Globalization and Regional Integration Division. The strategy includes four complementary components, namely:

(a) Integrating regional markets to cope with emerging economic blocs. Emphasis will be on facilitating transboundary flows of goods, services and persons through:

(i) Continuous development of the integrated transport system in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), which has already been launched. To this effect, the subprogramme will target regional agreements on the harmonization of standards of the modal components of the ITSAM network, developing a regional transport database through the harmonization and networking of statistical information from national systems as well as the formulation of a methodological framework for policy analysis and application;

(ii) Improving inter-Arab trade and tourism by facilitating border-crossing at ports and inland by reducing customs and operational formalities;

(iii) Cooperating with regional commissions in the development of operational schemes for building the capacity of member countries to develop land and land-cum-sea interregional linkages;

(iv) Promoting United Nations agreements such as the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic of 1965 and the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets of 1975;

(v) Promoting the adoption and application of the recommendations of global initiatives such as the Economic Commission for Europe Centre for

the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport and the trade efficiency programme of UNCTAD;

(vi) Organizing awareness drives on the role of the Arab Free Trade Area (AFTA) and other bilateral agreements in order to prepare member countries more effectively for trade liberalization and build regional capacity in this area;

(b) Responding to the trends of global trade liberalization in order to minimize potential threats and seize the opportunities offered by:

(i) Closely monitoring and analysing the evolving trends of the new regional and global trading systems, with special emphasis on AFTA and the World Trade Organization (WTO);

(ii) Conducting expert meetings and capacity-building workshops in order to prepare member countries more effectively for future rounds of multilateral negotiations and formulate a concerted strategy on issues of common interest;

(iii) Providing advisory services to member countries on various AFTA and WTO issues as well as partnership agreements;

(c) Assisting member countries in defining efficient inter-Arab trade and export policies for their main products in order to halt the decline in the share of the ESCWA region in international trade and improve their regional and global trading performance. In order to take advantage of increased international competition, advice will be given to member countries on ways of improving free competition in domestic markets for imported products or services. The subprogramme will also study the possible negative impact of competition on domestically produced goods and provide advice on ways and means of developing local competitive capacity;

(d) Enhancing regional development through encouraging domestic as well as foreign investments. To this end the subprogramme will:

(i) Review, assess and analyse existing credit and investment policies and incentives and legal environments in selected member countries, drawing comparisons with selected success stories, such as those of the Republic of Korea and Japan, with particular emphasis on intraregional incentives;

(ii) Formulate specific recommendations for the improvement of existing investment laws, regulations and incentives in order to increase significantly the attractiveness of member countries to domestic and foreign investments, with particular emphasis on intraregional capital flows and the return of capital invested outside the region;

(iii) Formulate agreements on such recommendations to be adopted by the respective member countries.

Expected accomplishments

18.32 Expected accomplishments would include: (a) increased facilitation of transboundary flows of goods, services, persons and capital among member countries; (b) increased awareness among member countries of the challenges to their economies and opportunities created by the new regional and international trading systems; (c) increased attractiveness of member countries for domestic, intraregional and foreign investment; and (d) increased export capacity of ESCWA member countries.

Indicators of achievement

18.33 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) the number of countries accepting and/or adopting harmonization schemes proposed by ESCWA in order to facilitate transboundary flows of goods, persons and capital; (b) the number of countries responding to ESCWA initiatives on globalization and regional integration; (c) the number of member countries accepting and/or adopting recommendations and schemes for enhancing the attractiveness of their business environment for domestic and foreign investment; and (d) the number of countries adopting efficient export policies resulting in increased export performance.

Subprogramme 5
Information and communication technology for regional integration

Objective

18.34 The objective of this subprogramme is to increase the capabilities of member countries to

harness information and communication technologies for their development.

Strategy

18.35 Within ESCWA, substantive responsibility for this subprogramme is vested in the Information and Communication Technology Division. The subprogramme will provide support with regard to the development of information and communication technologies policies, infrastructure and applications. To this effect, the subprogramme will take advantage of the convening power of the United Nations and aim at forging partnerships between the various regional stakeholders. It will build upon and add value to existing regional activities by helping to coalesce and scale up these efforts by facilitating coordination and collaboration among Governments, NGOs and the private sector, as well as the relevant regional and international institutions. It will also pursue issues related to information and communication technology-for-development as well as those identified in the Millennium Declaration that are of relevance to ESCWA countries.

18.36 The rapid development of information and communication technology has opened untapped potentials that could be put to the service of sustainable development and enable ESCWA countries to integrate into the global economy. However, the challenge imposed on the developing countries by the ever widening digital divide has given rise to a number of initiatives aimed at arresting this trend and turning it into a digital opportunity. Chief among these is the Information and Communication Technology Task Force, led by the United Nations and launched on 20 November 2001. This initiative is global in its conception, yet aims to be regional and specific in terms of national and regional needs and, in particular, the needs of the poor and marginalized groups.

18.37 The subprogramme will organize stakeholder campaigns and help develop broad-based programmes in order to raise awareness among decision makers and top officials of the region with regard to the impact and implications of information and communication technology on various sectors and on national and regional development policies. Advocacy creation will be sought by organizing regional seminars for policy makers, facilitating the development and promotion of national e-strategies and policies, and human and institutional capacity-building.

18.38 As a regional node, the subprogramme will establish cooperation and coordination mechanisms between regional players, both public and private, engaged in information and communication technologies development activities in order to promote coherence and synergy and identify joint endeavours. It will also conduct detailed studies in order to harmonize standards and protocols for interconnectivity.

18.39 The subprogramme will monitor and assess, from the ESCWA regional perspective, information and communication technology applications relevant to the issues of information and communication technology-for-development and make recommendations in this respect. The subprogramme will thus serve as a catalyst for the pooling of experiences.

Expected accomplishments

18.40 The expected accomplishments would include: (a) increased response of member countries to integrated information and communication technology policies in the development process; (b) improved connectivity in and between member countries; (c) increased positive impact on selected fields of development through wider utilization of promising information and communication technology applications and success stories; and (d) improved access to information and communication technology of the poor strata of the population in the region in order to reduce the digital divide.

Indicators of achievement

18.41 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) the number of countries accepting and/or adopting ESCWA policy recommendations on information and communication technology; (b) the number of governmental, private sector and civil society institutions participating in networking schemes at the national and regional levels; (c) the number of countries implementing promising information and communication technology applications; and (d) increase in the number of information and communication technology programmes and training facilities that target the least advantaged groups in society.

Subprogramme 6
Comparable statistics for improved planning and decision-making

Objective

18.42 The objective is to improve the statistical capabilities of countries in the region for informed decision-making and improve the availability and timeliness of comparable statistical information.

Strategy

18.43 The activities of this subprogramme will be coordinated by the Statistics Coordination Unit, which reports to the Deputy Executive Secretary. These activities will be conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and other United Nations international and regional agencies for the use of harmonized statistical concepts, methodologies and questionnaires compatible with internationally recognized statistical standards, within and outside the ESCWA secretariat. This would contribute to the development of reliable, timely, standardized and customized national and regional statistics and indicators needed by policy makers, analysts, decision makers, public and private enterprises, researchers and regional and international organizations in the ESCWA region. It would also meet the demand generated by the necessity of producing statistics and indicators for following up on the recommendations of United Nations global conferences.

18.44 The Sustainable Development and Production Division will undertake the development of customized sectoral statistics and indicators in order to meet the policy-making and planning requirements of ESCWA member countries effectively in specialized areas such as agriculture, industry, energy and water resources, environmental and other systems of statistics and development indicators. It will also provide advisory services and training aimed at increasing the technical capacity of countries in the region.

18.45 The Social Development Division will undertake the development of customized social statistics and indicators to meet the social policy-making requirements of those States and their civil societies effectively in specialized areas such as gender-disaggregated data, population, education, unemployment, urbanization and other systems of statistics. It will also provide advisory services and training aimed at increasing the technical capacity of countries in the region.

18.46 The Economic Analysis Division will undertake responsibility for increasing the technical capacity of countries in the region and, in particular, the implementation by ESCWA member countries of the 1993 system of national accounts and international comparison programme in order to produce purchasing power parity-comparable statistics that effectively meet regional policy-making and planning requirements of those States and develop customized economic statistics and sustainable development indicators.

18.47 The Globalization and Regional Integration Division will undertake the development of customized statistics and indicators on international and intraregional flows of goods, people and capital between member countries, as well as spatial, transport, infrastructure and regional integration indicators. It will also provide advisory services and training aimed at increasing the technical capacity of countries in the region.

18.48 Activities of the subprogramme will allow ESCWA to play the role of focal point for the region, together with the United Nations Statistics Division and United Nations and international organizations for the collection, processing and customization of data and updating databases shared with those agencies. These data will serve as the input for a number of statistical, economic, social and technical studies for all ESCWA subprogrammes. This will enhance the integrity of information within ESCWA and between ESCWA and all other United Nations and international bodies. Contributions will be made to the building of the statistical capacity of member countries by providing them with assistance in upgrading the statistical capabilities of their national cadres and improving and expanding their statistical infrastructures in accordance with international criteria, concepts and methodologies, in order to facilitate the implementation of international programmes and recommendations.

18.49 Member countries will be assisted in the adoption and utilization of economic statistics, national accounts and measuring indicators, mainly the sustainable development indicators, needed for monitoring development policies as well as implementation of corrective measures and adjustment of economic policies. A core of social statistics and

measurement indicators will be developed for adoption by ESCWA member countries in order to monitor various aspects of the quality of life development goals as specified in the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, such as employment, poverty, gender and other issues. Activities will promote cooperation and the exchange of information, views and experiences among national statistical agencies in the region, with a view to enhancing regional harmonization and integration and improving the regional role in the international arena with regard to statistics.

Expected accomplishments

18.50 Expected accomplishments would include: (a) improved national capacity for the production and dissemination of quality statistics; (b) improved capacity of member countries for the implementation of comparable national accounts; (c) improved capacity of member countries for the production and utilization of sectoral statistics and indicators to measure productivity and efficiency and monitor development policies in these sectors and, in particular, sustainable development indicators and statistics in new areas such as gender and poverty; and (d) increased production and utilization by member countries of a core of social indicators needed for monitoring social development policies.

Indicators of achievement

18.51 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) increased number of member countries using statistical tools and international statistical standards for analysis; (b) increased availability of national economic and social data using timely, reliable and comparable national accounts; (c) increased utilization of sectoral statistics and indicators, especially with regard to regional integration indicators and statistics in new areas; and (d) increased inclusion of core social indicators in decision-making.

Legislative mandates

Programme 18
Economic and social development in Western Asia

General Assembly resolutions

~~49/103~~	~~Food and agricultural development (subprogrammes 1 and 4)~~
~~51/176~~	~~Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (subprogrammes 2 and 5)~~
~~52/100~~	~~Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (all subprogrammes)~~
~~52/194~~	~~Role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty (subprogrammes 2 and 4)~~
~~52/195~~	~~Women in Development (subprogrammes 2 and 4)~~
~~52/196~~	~~Developing Human Resources for Development (subprogrammes 2, 3 and 4)~~
~~53/155~~	~~The right to development (all subprogrammes)~~
~~53/198~~	~~Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (subprogrammes 2, 3 and 4)~~
55/2	**United Nations Millennium Declaration (all subprogrammes)**
56/76	**Towards global partnerships (all subprogrammes)**
56/95	**Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit**
56/111	**Assistance to the Palestinian people (all subprogrammes)**
56/132	**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (all subprogrammes)**
56/150	**The right to development (all subprogrammes)**
56/177	**Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (all subprogrammes)**
56/182	**Science and technology for development (subprogrammes 1 and 5)**
56/188	**Women in development (all subprogrammes)**
56/189	**Human resources development (all subprogrammes)**
56/226	**World Summit on Sustainable Development (subprogrammes 1 and 5)**

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1996/46 **Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (subprogrammes 2 and 3)**

1998/43 **Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (all subprogrammes)**

1999/5 **Poverty eradication and capacity-building (all subprogrammes)**

2001/21 **Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits (all subprogrammes)**

2001/30 **Establishment of the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technical Innovation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (subprogrammes 1 and 5)**

~~*Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions*~~

~~1998/43 Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (all subprogrammes)~~

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

220 (XX) Adoption of the Beirut Declaration (all subprogrammes)

237 (XXI) **Rehabilitation of economic sectors in Palestine (all subprogrammes)**

Subprogramme 1
Integrated management of regional resources for sustainable development

General Assembly resolutions

~~47/194 Capacity-building for Agenda 21~~

~~49/111 Report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its second session~~

~~50/126 Water supply and sanitation~~

55/187 **Industrial development cooperation**

55/198 **Enhancing complementarities among international instruments related to environment and sustainable development**

55/199 **Ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development**

56/192 **Status of preparations for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003**

56/196 **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa**

56/199	**Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind**
56/200	**Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005**

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1991/85	Water resources development and progress in the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan
1991/86	Development and efficient use of energy resources

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

233 (XXI)	**The strengthening of cooperation between member countries in the field of shared water resources**
234 (XXI)	**Rationalization and increased efficiency of energy and the use of renewable sources of energy**

Commission on Sustainable Development resolution

6/1	Strategic approaches to freshwater management

Subprogramme 2
Integrated social policies

General Assembly resolutions

~~51/177~~	~~Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)~~
~~52/25~~	~~Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development~~
52/194	**Role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty**
~~53/120~~	~~Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action~~
~~53/146~~	~~Human rights and extreme poverty~~
53/183	**Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development**
55/106	**Human rights and extreme poverty**
55/210	**Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), including the initiative to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication**
56/113	**Preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family**
56/114	**Cooperatives in social development**

56/115 **Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: towards a society for all in the twenty-first century**

56/117 **Policies and programmes involving youth**

56/129 **Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas**

56/205 **Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)**

56/228 **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing**

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1997/17 Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action

~~1998/43 Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system~~

1998/44 Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits

2000/1 **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing**

2000/10 **Further promotion of equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities**

Subprogramme 3
Economic analysis and forecasting for regional development

General Assembly resolution

~~48/180 Entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development~~

~~49/97 Strengthening international organizations in the area of multilateral trade~~

~~49/101 United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency~~

~~50/91 Global financial integration: challenges and opportunities~~

~~52/180 Global financial flows and their impact on the developing countries~~

~~52/186 Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership~~

~~52/196 Developing human resources for development~~

~~52/205 Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries~~

~~53/155 Right to development~~

~~53/169~~	~~Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence~~
~~53/170~~	~~International trade and development~~
~~53/175~~	~~Enhancing international cooperation towards a durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries~~
56/181	**Towards a strengthened and stable international financial architecture responsive to the priorities of growth and development, especially in developing countries, and to the promotion of economic and social equity**

Subprogramme 4
Regional integration and adapting to globalization

General Assembly resolutions

~~51/172~~	~~Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system~~
~~52/184~~	~~Science and technology for development~~
~~53/177~~	~~Industrial development cooperation~~
52/180	**Global financial flows and their impact on the developing countries**
53/197	**International Year of Microcredit, 2005**
54/197	**Towards a stable international financial system, responsive to the challenges of development, especially in the developing countries**
55/191	**Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy**
55/279	**Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010**
56/165	**Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights**
56/178	**International trade and development**
56/181	**Towards a strengthened and stable international financial architecture responsive to the priorities of growth and development, especially in developing countries, and to the promotion of economic and social equity**
56/184	**Enhancing international cooperation towards a durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries**
56/202	**Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries**
56/209	**Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence**

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution

235 (XXI) **Adoption of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq**

Subprogramme 5
Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for regional development

General Assembly resolution

54/231 **Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence**

Economic and Social Council resolution

~~**1993/5** **1993 System of National Accounts**~~

1997/1 **The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States**

Subprogramme 6
Comparable statistics for improved planning and policy decisions

Economic and Social Council resolution

1993/5 **1993 System of National Accounts**